CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM • LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO • PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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STATEN ISLAND

SMASH RACISTS & BORDERS



Multiracial group of anti-racists gather to protest against racist anti-immigrant goons in Staten Island, NY from Palestine to Mexico, the bosses' borders got to go

STATEN ISLAND, NY, July 2- Once again, the racists rear their ugly heads on Staten Island, organizing a rally against migrants. Once again Progressive Labor Party (PLP), showed up to oppose them! NYC has been one of the epicenters of the racist anti-migrant crisis. Kkkop turned Mayor Eric Adams is mandating local churches to become shelters rather than find permanent housing for all workers. This particular church in Staten Island which has agreed to shelter 15 single migrant men nightly is now under attack by racists. As the capitalist system spirals deeper into decay and the global migrant crisis intensifies tens of millions of workers' from Gaza to Latin America, to the U.S. are displaced by capitalist crises like genocidal imperialist wars, racist unemployment, super-exploitation, sky-high costs of housing, and the twin crises of capitalist driven climate and homelessness

It is under these inhumane, unbearable circumstances that capitalism forces workers to risk their lives to flee all that they know, and that's when arch-racist Scott LoBaido, a Trump loving, racist goon, called for a rally to attack migrants on Instagram. Unfortunately for Lobaido and his band of racists on Staten Island, PLP mobilized our antiracist, multiracial, multigenerational contingent made up of members and friends to shut these racists down. Fighting these racists in the streets is a crucial step in organizing workers to smash this racist capitalist system and its rotten borders and replace it with the only system welcoming and nurturing to the entire international working class: communism!

Planning to shut the racists down

Lobaido, who gained notoriety for building a racist base on Staten Island to attack migrant workers, mobilized his racist followers on instagram to stage an anti-migrant protest at the church. Alerted by a friend who monitors LoBaido's racist, pro-Trump Instagram ravings, PLP members instantly organized a plan to fight back. Friends in Peace Action Staten Island and SI4 Palestine were contacted to join us at the church. We were welcomed by the pastor to gather on the church steps to oppose the racists, who were standing behind a police barricade across the street.

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

OUR FIGHT

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Hot mess summer

Rulers' mayhem escalates move toward fascism

Shots fired! The attempted assassination of the once and possibly future Racist-in-Chief Donald Trump is just the latest signpost of fast-rising fascism and nearing world war. As imperialist China advances at the U.S. rulers' expense, the Republican Party stands united behind an incoherent, incompetent grifter with no principle beyond his own self-interest. The Democrats are fractured over Genocide Joe Biden's public displays of mental and physical decrepitude. Together, the two parties are exposing the capitalist bosses' desperation, decay, and unbridgeable divisions.

In short, the U.S. ruling class is a hot mess. Their cherished liberal democracy–based on voting and the myth of workers' "freedoms"—is on life support. Their one way to check their death spiral, even temporarily, is to resort to fascism–to more aggressive state terror and direct control by the capitalists themselves. We cannot vote our way out of fascism; we must fight back to destroy it. Progressive Labor Party fights both the open fascists backing Trump (see page 1) and the liberal fascists of finance capital (see letters on page 6) while organizing to arm the working class with the most advanced ideas. In this period of unsustainable instability, the liberals remain our greatest threat because of their ability to declaw the ferocity of our class and mislead us into a fascist movement. From the United States to South America to the Middle East to Africa to Asia to Europe to the Caribbean, workers need a real solution to the perpetual crisis of capitalism. Communism is what you are looking for.

Failing empire splits the ruling class

At no other time in history has the U.S. empire faced so many rivals—China, Russia, Iran, North Korea—with so much military and economic might. Arch-rival China is on a clear trajectory to become the next dominant imperialist superpower. The U.S. is a shell of the country that dominated the globe after World War II. The old U.S.-led "rules-based international order doesn't really exist anymore…China is…building its own alternative order. As the old order unravels, these overlapping blocs are competing over what will replace it" (Foreign Affairs, 6/18). To prevail in a profit-driven system, the capitalist bloodsuckers have only one choice: world war.

Meanwhile, two competing factions of U.S. bosses are deeply divided over the role the country will play in the world. On one side are the finance capitalists, represented by the Democratic Party, whose profits are tied to controlling international markets and the flow of oil. This wing historically has controlled the government and state apparatus, and has been more willing to sacrifice some short-term profits for long-term gains. On the other side are the Small Fascists, represented by the Republican Party and Trump (see box for details), who are reluctant to contribute in the name of U.S. global supremacy. Case in point: In 1944, the U.S. bosses were willing to pay 94 percent in taxes (CBS News, 12/7/11). In 2018, the Small Fascists cried about a 23 percent tax rate (New York Times, 5/3).

Both of these gangs are huge threats to the working class. We call the finance capitalists Big Fascists for their bigger money, bigger weapons (at least for now) and bigger danger to mislead and disarm our class. We call the more domestic-oriented wing Small Fascists—although, if given the opportunity, they'd have an equal capacity for state terror and racist and nationalist violence.

Over the last half-century, as imperialist China began to threaten their dominance, the Big Fascists' suffered a series of humiliating defeats, from Vietnam to Afghanistan. Now the liberal rulers are trapped by their own contradictions. On the one hand, they need to scapegoat groups of workers—chiefly immigrants—to keep our class divided and deflect blame from the bosses' dysfunctional system. At the same time, they need a multiracial mass military willing to sacrifice their lives for a fading empire that makes workers' lives unlivable.

Small Fascists encroach on state power

Amid the rotting of U.S. imperialism, the Small Fascists saw a window of opportunity. What began as a fringe Tea Party movement after the 2008 economic crisis has now penetrated into every pillar of the state, from Congress to the courts to the White House. Trump instigated a rebellion after losing the 2020 election, and sounds ready to do the same on a larger scale this time around. The Supreme Court, packed with Trump appointees, has ruled that presidents have impunity to do whatever they want. The bosses appear to have passed the point where they can settle their differences without blood on the ground.

The vile Trump—sexual predator, self-serving felon, born-again hypocrite—is of course a danger to the working class. But he's also a problem for the bosses. He has no coherent strategy to advance the interests of the U.S. ruling class or even the Small Fascist wing. Like Biden, he reflects U.S. decay. Even so, the Small Fascists have successfully hijacked the Republican Party, which seems far more disciplined and unified than the Democrats at the moment.

In his best-selling Hillbilly Elegy, Trump's running mate, the brazen opportunist J.D. Vance, blames the white working class for their problems under capitalism. He's also called for cutting off welfare benefits (states.aarp.org, 9/8/22). Meanwhile, Trump's white racist base is gaining traction among some Black and brown workers (NYT Times, 7/15) who have seen little but growing inequality and the gutting of social services under Big

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Define to fight it

Capitalists compete by any means necessary. Much like smaller criminal gangs, different groups of capitalists battle one another to secure territory, resources, and exploitable labor–the basis of their profits.They have created the state as a mechanism to manage and protect this ruthless profit-driven system. Through laws, police, prisons, elections, the military, schools, the media, and other institutions, the bosses have built a dictatorship to keep themselves in power—and keep the working class out of power.

Fascism is a stage of late capitalism in crisis where the liberal democratic veil peels away to reveal a rotting dictatorship. The bosses use state terror to discipline their own class and enforce compliance by the working class–both essential conditions for waging global war. Fascism is marked by more direct and centralized rule, with intensified racism, sexism, and nationalism.

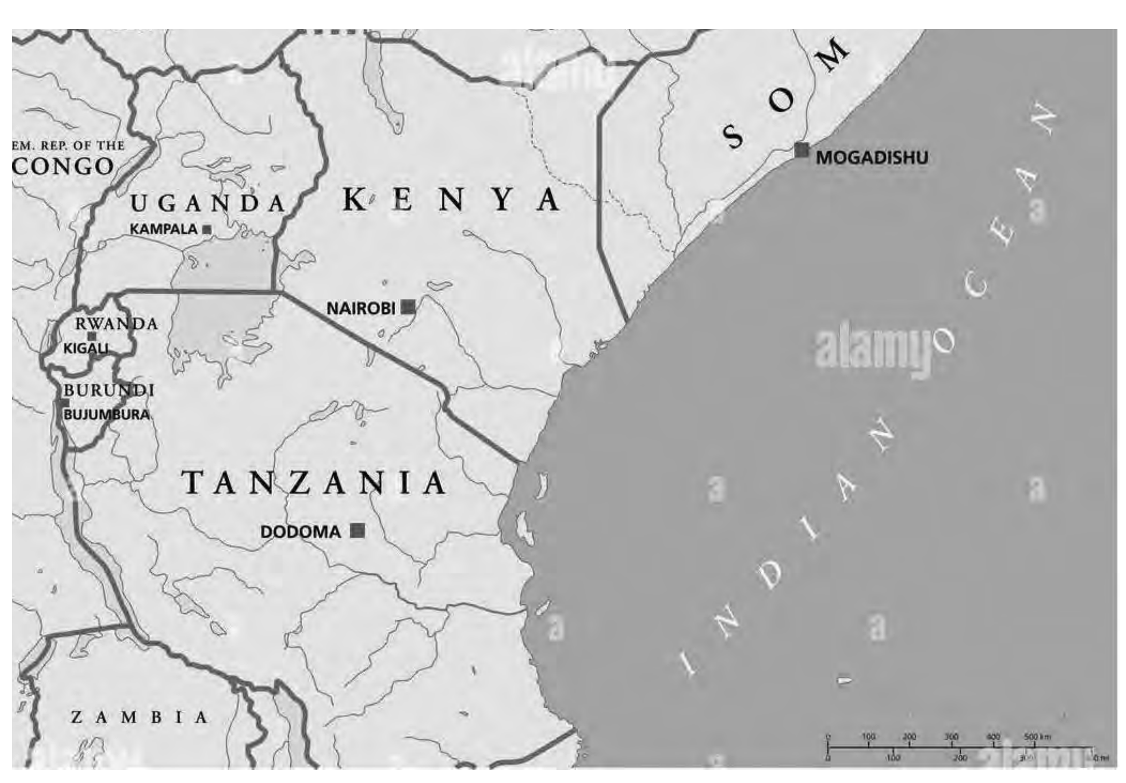
The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalists, principally the multinational banks and oil companies (JPMorganChase, ExxonMobil). They're trying to build a multiracial, patriotic coalition to back U.S. imperialism and protect their far-flung profits. This is the wing that plays the drums of World War III.

The Small Fascists are mostly domestically oriented capitalists, spearheaded by the Koch, Mercer, DeVos, and Coors families, along with Richard Mellon Scaife, Harry and Lynde Bradley, John Olin, Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, Rupert Murdoch and a cast of other billionaires. They want to cut taxes for short-term profits and are reluctant to invest in costly ground wars to defend the global U.S. empire. Their agenda includes a racist gutting of social services at home and a retreat from U.S. imperialist alliances, including NATO.

East Africa: flooded by capitalism; workers organize!

East Africa, July 4, 2024—Last night a group of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members met with a small group of students, parents, teachers, and a man who runs a tutoring center. They were affected by severe flooding in a town in east Africa. They discussed how the government and the rich were to blame for the flood as well as the suffering that has followed.

Ever since British colonialism, this area has been prone to flooding. When it was clear there would be severe flooding again, the government should have diverted the flood water from human settlements, but the officials were more interested in protecting their own investments. For example, in order to preserve the huge profits from safari tourism, they redirected the flood waters away from the hippo lake in Ngorongoro Crater increasing the flooding where people live. One member of parliament who owns farms near Lake Eyasi, another place where the flood waters would have been redirected, blocked this in favor of redirecting it to where people live. The government organized temporary housing in churches and schools, but only a small number benefitted. They distributed a pitifully small amount of food.



Finance capitalists use the State to ensure profits

Many people who borrowed from banks to build homes no longer have homes to live in but still have to pay back the banks. They also lost their gardens and animals which they depend on for survival. Affected government workers are getting their debts automatically deducted from their salaries, which is one way the government and the banks are colluding to guarantee their profits. Because of these policies many of the affected don't have the means to pay rent or build elsewhere. Some have been forced to move back into their damaged homes and impassable, disease prone neighborhoods without access to clean water.

The government officials knew that this was a flood prone area, but encouraged settlement anyway, splitting the area into plots to make the settlement official. (And, during the flooding they removed the individual plot markers to make it seem like an unofficial settlement, to try to absolve themselves of responsibility.) These corrupt government officials could never solve this problem because of their incompetence and self-interest. The workers, who knew how to divert the water, could have solved it but didn't have the power to assert themselves.

Workers figure out strategies to fight back

Those at the meeting felt powerless but didn't want to feel like that. One man focused on going to local officials to solve the flood problem for the future, but that doesn't address the problems that these workers are facing now. One comrade from the Caribbean shared stories about what they did around Covid relief when the government refused to take responsibility for the well-being of its citizens. With the financial solidarity of comrades and friends in the U.S., self-help brigades were formed to sew and distribute cloth masks and to set up communal sanitation stations where residents had no running water.

The meeting concluded with a group volunteering to buy some of the needed goods (mattresses, blankets, exercise books, pens, etc.) with money that PLP had raised for them. They plan to distribute them by prioritizing those most in need—the disabled, the elderly, single parent households, and school children. (The wheelchair of one disabled eight year-old boy was destroyed in the flood and has not been replaced.) They still need debt relief and new housing in a safe environment with electricity and clean water, but forming a self-help organization and distributing much needed items to affected families will empower them and could lead to more fightback against the banks and the government.

Next steps in organizing for communism

In this collective East African culture, helping each other comes naturally, but also in the culture, there is paralyzing fea and passivity—obstacles that need to be overcome. What workers do here to overcome those obstacles and fight for the services and assistance they need, can spread the spirit of resistance throughout East Africa and beyond. PLP's participation can make this small struggle a school for communism. This man-made disaster is a product of capitalism, a system that reduces working people to tools for the bosses' profit. Fighting to make things better, like this reform struggle is doing, may or may not be won, but history has shown us that capitalism will always try to take back whatever workers win. We will remain on the defense until our class is running society in our own interest. Building our movement for communism is the most enduring victory possible.

Staten Island: run the racists out of town

Continued from page 1

LoBaido used a bullhorn to address his followers and attack our group. We began to use a bullhorn, too, but the police stopped us. They said that LoBaido had a sound permit, while we did not. One of our members then pointed out to the cops that it was illegal for anyone to use a sound magnifying device within 500 feet of a church. Of course, the cops, who are never neutral, ignored us and allowed the racists to continue to use the bullhorn. Undeterred, all of us began to chant antiracist, pro-migrant slogans to drown out the racists. Everytime the racists chanted "USA", we chanted "KKK" and managed to drown out many of the racists' leaders who got on the mic including former mayoral candidate KKKurtis Sliwa, the leader of a racist vigilante group called the Guardian Angels.

After more than an hour, the various racist speakers, almost none from the neighborhood, ended their vile rants and left with their followers. Although LoBaido claimed that he was representing neighborhood sentiment, almost all the racists left in cars. Further disproving his lie, Party members who sold CHALLENGE and distributed pro-migrant leaflets before and after the rally were well received. A high point was when a car was stopped waiting for a traffic light, and the driver blasted his horn the whole time to drown out the racist speaker. He applauded us and took a CHALLENGE and a leaflet. After the racists finally departed all of us, including those who came from Peace Action and Staten Island for Palestine, left in an organized manner.

Small and Big Fascists: a threat to migrant workers

LoBaido represents the Small fascist, openly racist wing of the U.S. ruling class, most of them Trump supporters, including Nicole Malliotakis, the Republican Congresswoman representing Staten Island and part of Brooklyn. Politically, the Republicans dominate Staten Island. However, last week, when Staten Island politicians gathered at the church for a press conference to condemn the migrant shelter plan, one of the most vehement in opposition was Democratic Councilwoman Kamillah Hanks. The liberals are fascists in waiting.

As the migrant crisis continues, public officials, including Black Democratic Mayor Eric Adams, continue to fail to plan to adequately care for them. To save money, the migrants are to be sheltered in six Staten Island churches, including the one today. Happily for the capitalist rulers and their lackeys like Adams, this policy also stirs up racism and divides workers. While the Big Fascists lackey politicians and institutions use identity politics and intersectionality to divide our class, while ramping up racist, anti-migrant and sexist attacks on workers around the world. In contrast, Small Fascist Trump supporting misleaders like Lobaido play on workers' disaffection with liberal rulers by scapegoating migrants, winning many Black and Brown workers to buy into the racist trope of migrant men being unvetted predators and joining the Trump style domestic rulers ranks of small fascists in the process.

It is vital for the Party to militantly oppose the open racists like LoBaido and his followers and to work in other organizations to build antiracism and win workers and students to our line. However, we want workers to see that it is the Big Fascist main wing of the ruling class, represented by scum like Adams, Hochul, and Biden, that poses the greatest danger to our class. They still dominate the state and are doing their best to prepare for the war they hope will enable them to maintain their position as the world's top capitalist dog. We let Lobaido know that as long as PLP is around we will be there to run the racists out of town.

The only way to stop them once and for all is with communist revolution. Communism means building a world without borders, imperialist wars, and racist and sexist profits because workers from Gaza to Staten Island and beyond will be in charge of meeting all our needs, not profit nationalist hungry bosses. If you agree, Join PLP so we can build this world together!

Kenya: youth storm parliament, needs to attack profit system

Nairobi, Kenya, July 12—In mid-June, a million Kenyan youth in 34 out of 47 counties rose up to protest against government corruption and oppression. Spreading rapidly on social media, the courageous protests culminated in the storming of the Parliament while in session with the Members of Parliament (MPs) fleeing like cockroaches. After protesters threw rocks, the killer cops opened fire on them with tear gas, water cannons and live ammunition. So far there are 49 protesters dead, 361 injured, 32 disappearances, and 627 arrests.

The protests started with the passage of the 2024 Finance Bill that funds the annual budget. It included massive, anti-working-class tax hikes and more money for politicians. For example almost 3 million shillings (US$23,000) were allocated to wives of 3 high-level officials for offices (that sum could feed more than 80 working-class families for a year). The bill would dissolve 26 government corporations that provide services duplicated by private companies, resulting in mass layoffs and cuts in affordable services to the working class. Protesters demanded that the Finance Bill be rescinded and the resignation of President Ruto and those MPs who voted for the bill. The reform demands show a young, working class that is fed up with capitalist oppression and the ruling class trying to solve their financial crisis on the backs of workers.



Men and women workers in Kenya protesting austerity measures introduced by U.S. imperialist lapdog William Ruto's finance bill aka "professional theft" by the capitalist class against workers.

Young Workers Take the Lead

The protesters are mainly Gen Z, men and women, students and university-educated lawyers, teachers, and doctors, without jobs or prospects of jobs. They claim there's no leadership to this movement and refuse to meet with Ruto. Some MPs wanted to join the protests but they would only be allowed if they resigned from parliament. The protesters halted the demonstrations temporarily because the police and government had sent infiltrators in to sidetrack the demonstrations with individualist attacks and looting with the goal of discrediting the protests.

Ruto is widely despised by the Kenyan working class but his corruption is actually business as usual for capitalism. Kenya ranks 8th in the world in extreme poverty, but MPs are paid the second highest salaries in the world, earning over the equivalent of US$7,000 a month, in addition to US$750 every time they sit for a parliament session. While Kenya has its own national airline, Ruto flies all over the world in privately-leased Saudi jets. A common local expression is "When Ruto's not flying, he's lying." Biden just named Kenya a major non-NATO ally, a first in sub-Saharan Africa.

As the U.S. bully loses out to Chinese and Russian influence in Africa, Ruto is trying to help it maintain a foothold. Inter-imperialist rivalry forces all governments to choose sides between the superpowers at the same time as it deepens the inequality in the world. Half of Kenya's revenue goes to repay foreign debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) the World Bank, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. In fact, Ruto wrote the Finance Bill in response to the IMF's demands for cuts in spending.

Reforms Are Not Enough

As of this writing, the protests have forced Ruto to withdraw tax hikes and many other parts of the bill. The movement has already inspired and emboldened the working class of Kenya, as well as other African countries, such as Nigeria and Tanzania. While some protesters did carry signs connecting the Finance Bill to imperialism —"IMF, World Bank, Stop the Modern Day Slavery"— the focus was on reforms to the Kenyan government. Without internationalist, communist leadership and goals, all reform struggles are bound to fail. The ruling class of Kenya will eventually take back the reforms. By linking local issues to the failures of world-wide capitalism, the movement can broaden their base and work towards the goal of destroying capitalism with communist revolution. Progressive Labor Party supports workers' struggles around the world with the goal of world-wide communist revolution, Join us!

Smash U.S. rulers in death spiral towards fascism

Continued from page 2

Fascist rule.

Riding with Biden into fascism

As the pathetic election spectacle in the U.S. sputters on, it's the Big Fascists who continue to slaughter our class in Gaza. After tens of thousands of survivors had fled to Al-Mawasi, a designated "safe zone,"

Israel's Nazi bosses used made-in-U.S. bombs in one of the bloodiest atrocities of a nine-month genocide (NY Times, 7/15). The current official death toll in Gaza is nearly 40,000. Every hour, the U.S.-Israel fascists drop 42 bombs, destroy 12 buildings, kill 15 people and injure 25 more(OCHA, 11/1/23).

Genocide Joe boasts about the "toughest set of reforms to secure" the U.S.-Mexico border "ever in history" (CNN, 2/23). He's used his Border Patrol gestapo to match Trump's deportation numbers (Immigration Policy Institute, 6/27). But Biden's concentration camps have triggered little mass protests, no rebellions in the streets. Compared to 2020, the working class has "cooled down," just as Biden's Big Fascist masters hoped, though the movement against the Gaza genocide is a glimmer.



There is no lesser evil among capitalist bosses—only evil. No matter which murdering monster occupies the White House, we can't afford to be complacent. Workers, youth, and soldiers are losing their illusions about U.S. democracy. Those who supported the likes of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez were gravely disappointed by her defense of genocidal Zionism. Those who joined the largest protest movement in world history after the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor got crumbs in return. But without organized fightback and communist consciousness, disillusionment can turn into isolation and aimless, suicidal violence, as we saw with Thomas Crooks. Cynicism is not the answer.

Fascists on the attack, we fight them back!

The bosses will have you think that the only choice we have is between open fascists and liberal fascists. But there is always another way: communism.

Progressive Labor Party has long warned of deepening splits among the bosses, of rising fascism and possible civil war. But communists must do more than warn workers; they must also prepare workers to fight back. A mass, unified, multiracial working class is the one thing the bosses cannot control—and cannot overcome.

We can't predict when or where the next world war will begin or how the devastation will play out. So, friends, what can we do? We can share this editorial with our folks and cultivate deep political and personal relationships with more of our class siblings. We can dare to defy our local bosses by uniting with other workers for what's in our best interests. We can strive to motivate everyone around us to commit to fight like a communist for life. Progressive Labor Party doesn't have the numbers to turn the guns around—yet. But what we do today—and what we refuse to do—counts. Fight fascism! Choose the only way out of the hellscape of capitalism–choose communism!

Violence, a tool of the capitalist state

Violence is part and parcel of the capitalist system. As CHALLENGE goes to press, the motives of 20-year-old Thomas Crooks are unclear. Whether this was an act of lone-wolf vigilantism or one backed by either side of the U.S. ruling class, it's clear that both the Small and Big Fascists, cynical opportunists who they are, will exploit the incident for votes.

Before the blood dried on Trump's ear, all shades of Democrats, from so-called socialist Bernie Sanders to Nancy Pelosi, quickly tweeted that "violence has no place in our democracy." This is the same U.S. democracy that was built through genocide and enslavement. It's the same democracy that spawned the Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow, that has lynched, deported, and incarcerated our class, that threw workers of Japanese descent into concentration camps, that terrorized Muslim workers after 9/11—and that's just within the U.S. borders. The Big Fascists became the world's biggest gangsters through violence on the daily.

But responding to organized state violence with acts of individual violence can only hurt the working class. To defeat the capitalist bosses, workers need mass, organized violence. We need communist revolution.

Spanish Civil War

Lessons from ferocious fight vs. fascism

This article was excerpted from a PLP magazine article titled Lessons of the People's War in Spain 1936-1939 Progressive Labor, Vol. 9, No. 5 (Oct.-Nov. 1974), 106-116. This July marks 88 years since the start of the Spanish Civil War. The lessons from the Spanish People's War continue to be invaluable to the working class, sharpening our understanding of how we can defeat capitalism, fascism. Above all, learning the history of the Spanish Civil war can help us learn from the mistakes made by fighters in that period, so that we don't risk repeating them on the march to communist revolution.

The Spanish Civil War in 1936-1939 was a heroic example of working-class internationalism, led by the communist movement to fight fascism. At the same time it continues to hinder today's communist movement. We must learn the mistakes from history in order to successfully smash the capitalist ruling class once and for all.

The war was a ferocious fight between the Spanish Republicans and the fascist forces. The Spanish Republic was a weak liberal democracy, defended by an anti-fascist coalition made up of communists, anarchist organizations and other fake left groups, along with small bosses who were being ousted by the move to a fascist government. The fascist forces were backed by the main wing of the Spanish ruling class and the ruling classes of Europe and the U.S.

The Spanish Communist Party (PCE) and the Comintern (the Russian leadership of the international communist movement at the time) provided the only effective leadership--political and military--in the struggle against fascism in Spain. The PCE, unlike the numerous groups of fake leftists, was able to organize hundreds of thousands of workers into a powerful military force, despite the enormous material difficulties and their own weaknesses.

The PCE established the Spanish Republic in 1931. From the outset, the Republican government struggled to hold onto power. The growing fascist forces, backed by a large section of the Spanish ruling class, made several attempts to overthrow the Republic and move to fascism.

In 1936, the leftist parties formed a so-called "Popular Front" slate, the rationale being that in order to confront the dangers of fascism and imperialist war, communists should form an alliance with Social-Democrats and some bourgeois elements to preserve the liberal democracy, which ultimately means preserving peace for the ruling class.

Capitalists unite in support of fascists

In 1936 the fascists launched an attack with help from the European ruling class. Hitler sent the first substantial military aid of 20 transport planes to bring the Fascist Army of Africa to Spain. At its peak, German aid to the Fascists stood at about 6,000 troops plus a large amount of material. The maximum size of the Italian forces was about 100,000 troops, with enormous quantities of material. The European democracies refused to sell arms to the Republic and set up a naval blockade in conjunction with Germany and Italy to prevent weapons and volunteer anti-fascist fighters from getting to Spain.

U.S. companies also sold arms to Nazi Germany, then shipped them to Spain. In April 1938, President Roosevelt publicly admitted that the bombs falling on Spanish cities were American-made. "It is all perfectly legal," he said.

While the rest of the Soviet Union sent aid to the Republic, the total number of Soviet personnel in Spain at any one time likely never totaled 700. Soviet arms shipments were limited after the closing of the French border by the necessity to run the blockade and also by the desire to avoid a world war, a desire unrealized.

Communist organize the working class to fight

The communist movement, through the PCE, organized the defense of Madrid. Their famous Fifth Regiment recruited over 60,000 militiamen (half PCE members), which soon became the backbone of the People's Army.

Partly because of the seriousness and effectiveness with which the communists organized the militias, membership in the PCE, and their affiliated groups soared: from 30,000 at the beginning of the war to 200,000 at the end of 1936 to 1,000,000 by June, 1937.

Remote volunteers recruited largely by communist parties were organized into communist-led International Brigades. About 40,000 served in the brigades to fight back against the fascists

Famous for their discipline and courage, the International Brigade were some of the few troops in the early days with any sort of training , and they fought well throughout. Their recruitment was an act of internationalism enormously appreciated by the workers.

In another costly error by the communist movement, foreigners were withdrawn in 1938 in a vain effort to secure League of Nations (the precursor to the U.N.) action against German and Italian intervention.

As fascist troops approached Madrid, communists assumed the functions of the departed civil servants; radio, leaflets and banners urged the workers of Madrid to dig trenches and build barricades. Communists organized block by block; Fifth Regiment leaflets gave advice on battling tanks and house-to-house fighting.

On November 7th, 1936, fascist troops, expecting an easy victory, assaulted Madrid from the west, southwest, and northwest, but were repulsed by the hard-pressed militias, particularly the communist organized Fifth Regiment, in hand-to-hand fighting.

At the same time fake left groups undercut the anti-fascist fight. For example, the leaders of the 3,000-man anarchist column from the Aragon Front, demanded an independent section of the front "so that their achievements could not then be claimed by other units."

The anarchists were given a sector in the University City, with artillery and air support, but refused to attack. When the Fascists attacked the anarchists broke and ran, abandoning a key bridge and positions in the University.

Failure to fight racism deadly mistake

Throughout the war, the fascists relied on troops recruited and conscripted in Spanish Morocco. Around 100,000 Moors fought for the Fascists. The Fascists encouraged every sort of atrocity on the part of the Moors, playing on the racism of the Republicans with great success.

Republican propaganda repeated and embroidered this racist trash. The PCE never made a public fight over this crucial issue, which should not only have been a matter of principle, but could have produced a powerful and proven ally in the struggle against the fascist bosses. The biggest error by the communists was not understanding that the key to victory in the civil war was the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, not as a vague objective for the far-off future, but right then. There can be no doubt that the opportunity for taking power existed: the PCE was the real organizer of the war against fascism, and could have united the working class even more completely around workers' dictatorship

Key to winning: Rely on the working class

The bosses can be relied on for racism, murder and exploitation, but not for help. The only alternative is to rely on the workers, and that means fighting for workers' power. Spain shows clearly what relying on the bosses means. The fascists won the war in 1939. In the aftermath 400,000 people--apart from those dead in the fighting—were slaughtered after the Republic fell. The clear lesson of Spain and the larger conflict which was to follow is that workers have absolutely nothing to gain from alliances with bosses. We must rely on our own strength, fight racism and settle for nothing short of workers' power and communism.

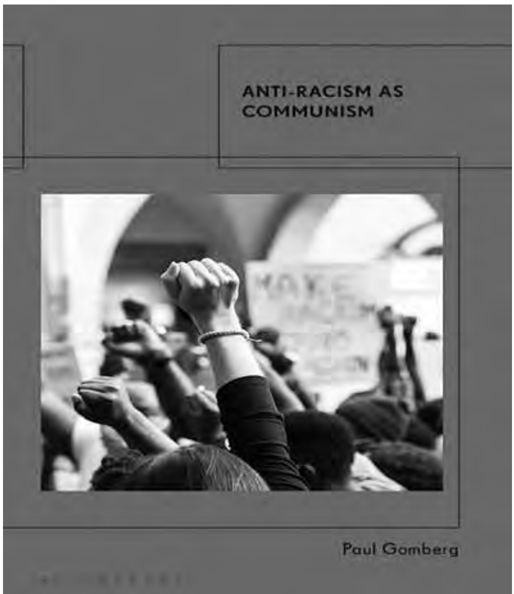
Book review of *Anti-Racism as Communism*

A new book, Anti-Racism as Communism, written by Paul Gomberg, is thought-provoking and insightful in its argument that only communism can abolish racism. He takes us through the history of racism in the U.S., and the central role it plays in capitalism's development. He posits a definition of racism that focuses on social inequality, not just prejudice or bigotry, and emphasizes the uniqueness and viciousness of anti-Black racism.

The book carefully develops a summary of the historical events and the relationship to profit that led to the invention of racism. In the early 1600's and beyond, class solidarity was embedded in Black/poor white relations. In this period, indentured servants from Europe and enslaved people from Africa were friends, lovers, partners, and companions. As the 1700s brought new racist laws required to be read in church twice a year, and punishments meted out for disobeying those laws, racism began to develop.

Examples of Black and white worker unity against racism

Racism was integral to the founding of the U.S.—all of the "founding fathers" were racists. Most were enslavers who got rich off racism, including the leading racist theoretician, Thomas Jefferson. Class solidarity was also a factor of black/poor white relations in this time. "The capitalist system drove down the enslaved and the poor white farmers, but differently." (p. 43)



The fight against racism is inseparable from the fight against capitalism— Read AntiRacism as Communism by Paul Gomberg today!

Of course, racism did not end after the Civil War. The purpose of Jim Crow was to separate Black and white and prevent anti-racist class unity. "The tragedy was the failure of white labor to understand that the racist oppression of black labor was their own oppression, that the working class as a whole needed to fight racist oppression. Instead, many white workers participated in the oppression of their black fellow workers, undermining them all." (p. 57)

There were, of course, exceptions. In the 1880s and 90s there were integrated fights of coal miners. In some places, white miners realized that if Black workers were paid less, white miners were more likely to lose their jobs. Rendville, Ohio, for example, with a majority white population, had racially integrated schools and elected a Black mayor in 1887. Still, because the bosses hold state power, gains for some workers mean losses for others. "Only the seizure of power makes a truly human society for workers possible." (p. 74)

Paul details the many anti-racist fights organized by the Communist Party, particularly in the 1930s - 1950s. The fact that these struggles brought Black and white together was a powerful blow to Jim Crow. Black-white worker unity was prominent in struggles of Memphis maritime workers, Ford Rouge workers, Waterloo meatpackers, the Chicago Packinghouse Workers, and Louisville farm equipment workers, to name some examples. The Communist Party was instrumental in helping to develop racial unity in these struggles.

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LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Correction:

In our July 17th issue, we published a speech on page 5 entitled Graduation Speech: Students, you are the fire of the world. We made a regrettable technical error that resulted in us cutting a significant section of the speech, specifically about how a PL'er is building ties with students and parents. We sincerely apologize. The entire speech can be found on www.plp.org



Members of Progressive Labor Party joined enraged community members who held a vigil and took to the streets to protest the racist murder of Samuel Sharpe, a displaced worker living in an encampment in Milwaukee. The protest took place just hours after five killer KKKops from Columbus, Ohio shot Samuel 8 times in the back. Look out for the full article in our next issue of CHALLENGE.

Strikers expose NEA's racist hypocrisy

The leadership of my union, the National Education Association (NEA), the largest teachers union in the U.S., demonstrates how union bosses are complicit in oppressing workers in every industry under capitalism and throughout the world. The NEA claims to be a 'social justice union' but they have played a deadly game by pretending to support a ceasefire in Palestine while interfering with their members'efforts to educate and organize against genocide, all at the behest of U.S. imperialists and Zionists. At the same time, they lie (just like capitalists!) about their contract bargaining with the union of workers they employ, the National Education Association Staff Organization (NEASO), failing to deal honestly with the needs of these workers. They stand exposed siding with warmongering, profit-stealing capitalists every time. They are only for 'justice' when their positions and pockets aren't threatened! The President and Vice President of NEA each clear about $400,000 and their employees at NEASO are poorly paid union employees. NEASO members are furious that the NEA is outsourcing millions of dollars of employee work to contractors in a union busting move, undercutting their bargaining power. NEASO workers also exposed the corruption of Becky Pringle, union president, for using $8,500 of union funds for three days of hairstyling. Glad you look good, Becky – not!

In Maryland, the local union chair used deceptive means to squash any discussion of the war on Palestinians and Israel's land grab at the same meeting where she hypocritically recognized our modern-day occupation of stolen indigenous lands in the U.S. Nationally, the union leaders are no better, dodging a serious approach to the Gaza/Palestine issue and lying about the working conditions and pay of their own employees. NEASO workers rightly decided to strike during the teachers annual meeting, forcing it to close. Progressive Labor Party teachers rallied with other teachers for Palestinian rights before the shutdown, exposing the NEA's failure to oppose genocide. If it wasn't clear before, it should be clear now that only a multi-racial, communist struggle will get workers what we need. Adelante!

What's nationalism?

The Progressive Labor Movement (PLM) and the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) were formed in 1961 and 1965, respectively, when nationalism was in the news media to a much greater degree than it is today in 2024. As a result, labeling a person or organization as nationalist (such as the National Liberation Front in Vietnam) conveyed a much clearer image of what it or they supported: a supposed revolutionary outlook hiding an actual capitalist economic-political vision of working-class exploitation by local capitalists instead of foreign ones.

Many people, including the PLM and the early PLP, were and still are fooled by the pseudo-revolutionary slogans of nationalists and their groupings. However, based on a dialectical-materialist analysis of the actions of various nationalists, the PLP realized that so-called "revolutionary" nationalism was the opposite of what it claimed to be. Unfortunately, despite a full explanation of the counter-revolutionary nature of nationalism in the August, 1969 issue of PL Magazine, no other organization accepted the PLP's point of view. The accuracy of the analysis in 1969 continues to be valid. For example, today Vietnam is a country filled with low-wage sweat shops run by both local and foreign capitalists.

Right now, there are several individuals and organizations who are classic nationalists masquerading as "revolutionaries" behind phony sloganeering and outright anti-worker activities. The most important of these groups are Hamas, the Houthis in the Middle East, and Iran. ALL of the politicians in every country are also nationalist fakers. Nationalists are dangerous because their rhetoric sounds pro-working class but when you examine what nationalists actually do, it is clearly thoroughly in favor of the capitalist ruling class and against the interests of workers.

The PLP opposes all forms of nationalism. We no longer make a distinction between so-called "revolutionary" nationalism and reactionary nationalism. Nationalism sells-out the working class to the highest capitalist bidder. We do support working inside nationalist organizations to expose their nefarious intentions and to win honest workers away from them.

Book review of 'Anti-Racism as Communism'

Continued from page 5

When Nazis came to power in Germany, the Soviets and communists elsewhere allied with liberals against fascism instead of organizing for communist revolution to smash fascism. Later, in 1947, the Taft-Hartley Act was passed by Congress in an effort—which ended up being successful— to destroy communist-led unions. Party members were caught off guard because they did not fully understand how incompatible capitalism is with workers' needs. We must learn from both the successes and mistakes of the Communist Party, as we continue to fight for an egalitarian world.

The Civil Rights movement ended many forms of discrimination, but Black workers were still relegated to lower-paid jobs, their children went to segregated schools and they lived in segregated neighborhoods. "The civil rights movement… did not place racism in the context of exploitation of workers and benefits to capital of a divided working class." (p. 126) Furthermore, Black workers are still prominent in low-wage work, are often "last hired, first fired", and have considerably less inherited wealth mostly due to past and present racist policies and practices regarding home ownership.

From his own experience as a teacher at the predominantly Black Chicago State University, Gomberg presents the idea that racism can be committed by Black people against other Black people. In one example, a student is unjustly beaten and arrested by a cop, who is supported by administrators and never disciplined for his actions. Everyone in this example is Black.

Racism also is harmful to white and other non-Black working-class people. Racism has divided the working class, weakened unions, and encouraged a culture of individualism. It has driven down conditions for Black and other non-white people, but also, to a lesser extent, white people. The capitalists increase their share of wealth, while poverty creates stress for the working class. The only way to end racism is to end capitalism.

Only communism can end racism

Gomberg argues that an important aspect of ending racism is to "alienate race". This is not a process that ignores the existence of racism. Rather, it is the process of thinking of yourself and others in terms other than the racial identities that the capitalists have created. He does not posit that this is an easy process or even one that can be completed under capitalism. He does argue that alienating race is an essential part of the elimination of racism. It is a process that can begin when we are still under the yoke of capitalism, even though it can only be fully realized under communism.

Additionally, Paul discusses the importance of what he calls "race-centered Marxism". In other words, while it is true that there are many groups of people who are discriminated against by the capitalist class, racism is historically and currently their primary weapon to divide the working class.

The book ends on a hopeful note. It briefly analyzes the strengths and weaknesses within the Chinese Communist Party. We have much to learn from both. While encouraged by their success, we must also learn from their mistakes, which led to their current capitalist state. Combining our practice in militant class struggle with dialectical materialist understandings of history like that in Antiracism as Communism will guide us to construct a new communist society that's stronger than ever.

(Note: Antiracism as Communism currently is only sold in hardcover form, for over $100. CHALLENGE suggests that readers ask their local libraries purchase for circulation).

Learn to struggle from past fightbacks

Continued from page 8

sponse. We pushed the limits. We made mistakes but we learned by doing. Practice is primary.

Nationalism is nationalism, but it was different back then. Revolutionary nationalists, aligned with many communists, defeated the U.S. imperialists, kicking them out of Vietnam. Today Vietnam is a capitalist country and a sweatshop for profiteering corporations led by Nike. Nationalism is a dangerous idea for the international working class because it keeps us tied to the bosses of capitalist nations. Just because they look like us and speak the same language as us does not mean they have our interests. Capitalists will always use their power to continue their profiteering.

Some key lessons from those years

Lesson 1: Multi-racial, working-class unity is necessary to fight racist attacks! PLP called for college students on summer vacation to get factory jobs and build a worker-student alliance. Many Party members learned from workers how to fight the bosses on the job. Strike support during the 1970 General Motors strike was organized by PLP college students on strike against the Vietnam War. The point was to show how capitalism was a system that attacked the whole working class. GM, GE and the U.S. Postal Service attacked workers in the U.S. by cutting their wages and forcing them to work in dangerous conditions while U.S. imperialism dropped bombs on workers in Vietnam.

Lesson 2: Base Building is key! This means we have to get to know each other and build trust to effectively fight back. Comrades described how much of this happened at the bar. Spending time together, building friendship and struggling over ideas are all necessary ingredients to building a strong movement that can survive the bosses' attacks.

Lesson 3: A communist party is necessary to eradicate capitalism! Fighting the bosses takes discipline, organization and commitment. Right now the working class is unorganized and influenced by capitalist ideas of individualism and cynicism. But workers can reject those ideas and organize to fight back collectively. Under communism workers will run the world. We need millions of workers committed to fighting for a world where we work collectively based on what we all need, not based on profits for billionaires.

We take inspiration from these fightbacks but today we live in a different period. This period is one of increasing chaos as the world's bosses' rivalry for top-dog status spirals us towards world war III. There is more racist scapegoating of migrants, more genocidal attacks and more brutal suppression of fightback. Our job still remains the same though. We must continue the lifelong struggle to defeat capitalism with communist revolution. We have a long and difficult road ahead. We need everyone to join us so we can bury this disastrous system once and for all! On that grave, we will build a new world- one where all humanity is valued!

Bangladesh

Pro-working class fighters in Bangladesh unify against bosses anti-working class job quotas. Only in a communist world will we be able to own our labor and provide jobs for all.



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

U.N. office denounces Israeli attacks on civilians

Al Jazeera, 7/13–The OHCHR has said it condemns the continued Israeli military use of weapons "with area effects in populated areas of Gaza, including in areas which [the military] has itself designated as humanitarian zones, killing many civilians"... the Israeli military reportedly "fired several Air Dropped Munitions in al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis, next to a makeshift camp hosting around several hundreds of people"...Israeli military quadcopters also reportedly targeted emergency rescue workers, killing at least one Civil Defence worker and injuring several others.

On the same day, the Israeli military struck a makeshift mosque inside Shati refugee camp, west of Gaza City. Reports indicate that because it "struck shortly after the noon prayer, many people were still inside or near the mosque, resulting in the death of at least 17 male Palestinians." The Office said that the use of "weapons with wide area effect in densely populated areas" has led to "disproportionate harm to civilians and damage to civilian infrastructure", suggesting a "pattern of willful violation of the disregard of International Humanitarian Law principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution".

Exploitation of migrants is built into U.S. law

Wall Street Journal, 7/13–A growing number of undocumented immigrants are hitting retirement age without savings or the cushion of Social Security or Medicare...Many opt to continue working until they are physically unable, while others rely on help from younger family members..."I laugh when people ask me at what age I'm going to retire," said Marta Salazar, 66 years old..."I know I have to work until my body gives out."

The population of immigrants in the U.S. without legal status stood at about 10.5 million in 2021, according to a Pew Research Center report last year. While many work under the table, some find jobs in the formal sector, often using fake documents or borrowed identities. Those who do generally pay Social Security and Medicare taxes...migrants made a net contribution of about $12 billion to the Social Security system in 2010, the most recent year in which such an analysis was conducted...But they are barred by law from receiving benefits from the program.

Israeli fascists drive Lebanese toward Hezbollah fascists

Foreign Affairs, 7/12–Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently declared that as his country's military operations in Gaza wind down, Israel will turn its attention to its foe to the north: the Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah. The two parties have a long history of conflict rooted in Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, its occupation of the southern portion of the country from 1985 to 2000, and a full-scale war the two sides fought in 2006...In recent weeks, concerns have grown that another major war between the two parties could break out.

Within Lebanon... [Hezbollah] operates as a legal political party and as a security force: the group effectively governs much of the country, particularly in the south and east. Hezbollah also provides basic services to those living in the areas it controls...In effect, the group operates as a state within a state.

Hezbollah does not command widespread support across the country. And yet many Lebanese favor some of Hezbollah's basic positions. Lebanese overwhelmingly support the rights of Palestinians and condemn Israel for its actions in Gaza...And if Israel invades Lebanon to attack Hezbollah, support for the organization would likely rise further.

Taliban fascists terrorize Afghani women

DW, 7/10–The Taliban government in Afghanistan is carrying out stricter enforcement of religious law in Afghanistan through the deployment of "morality police," according to a UN report published Tuesday. The UN report said the Taliban has created a "climate of fear" since the Islamist militant group regained power in August 2021 and set up the so-called "Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice"...Since taking power, the Taliban have also barred girls and young women from receiving an education, while keeping women out of public jobs. Morality police squads have the power to scold, arrest, and punish citizens who participate in activities considered to be "un-Islamic," including wearing "Western" hairstyles and listening to banned music.

LEARN TO STRUGGLE FROM PAST FIGHTBACKS

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, June 29—The U.S. ruling class wants us to believe their electoral circus is the only way to fix the problems inherent to capitalism. But as communists we understand that the only way out of this worldwide misery of capitalism is organizing to smash it and replace it with communism, a society run by and for the international working class. In this vein more than 50 comrades and friends gathered to learn from inspiring fightback stories of veteran Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members who organized against U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and against racist and sexist attacks in the U.S. in the late 1960s and 70's. We discussed how to apply these lessons to the current movement against racist genocide in Gaza.

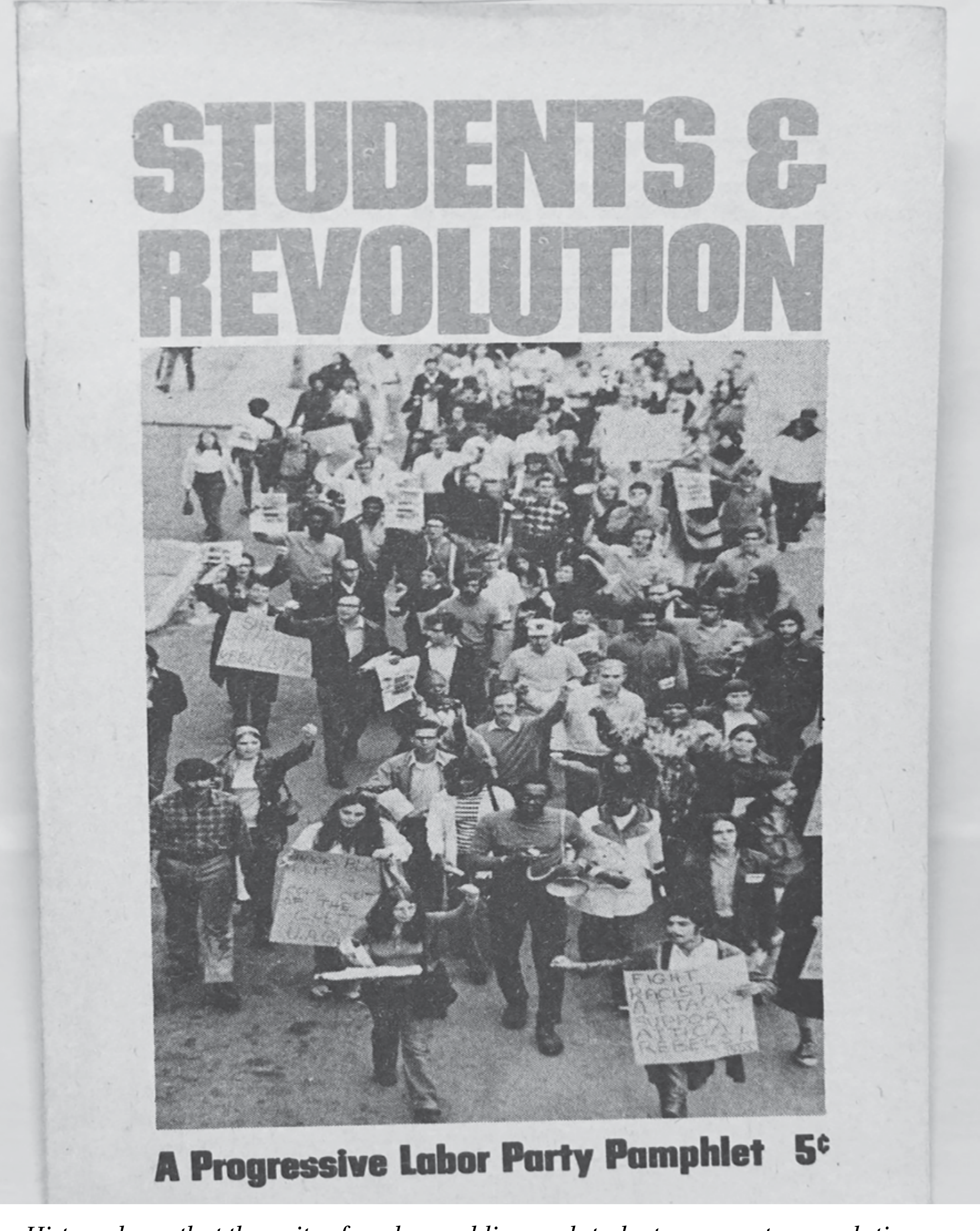
The opening speech detailed the disasters our international brothers and sisters are living through today from imperialist wars, to genocide in Palestine and Sudan, to climate catastrophes, to racist anti-immigrant attacks. The importance of revolutionary optimism was emphasized- the understanding that the international working class will one day smash this horrific capitalist system. Participants then moved from table to table to learn from five veteran comrades who shared inspiring stories of how they joined the mass movement against the Vietnam War and against racism. They spoke about gaining the experience and confidence to join a Party dedicated to fighting for a communist future free of wars for profit, inequality, police terror and the impossibly long list of capitalist-created social ills.

The world, then and now

The world was different then. Millions of workers around the world were inspired by the communist movement led by the Soviet Union and China. There was mass unrest, strikes, antiracist rebellions in cities and mass marches. In 1969-70 Black workers led a strike of 164,000 workers against General Electric for 102 days. The Party led thousands marching to the Labor Department in support, chanting "Warmaker, Strikebreaker, Smash GE." In 1970 postal workers went on an illegal, wildcat strike, once again led by Black workers. In 1970 over 400,000 workers struck against General Motors. In 1971 when the U.S. bosses invaded Cambodia, protests on college campuses exploded.

PLP was involved in bringing revolutionary ideas to campuses and workplaces, to picket lines and mass marches. Masses of workers and students were in action and many Party members acted boldly in re-

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History shows that the unity of workers, soldiers and students can create a revolutionary force to overthrow capitalism — We must organize under a mass PLP to build a communist world!

WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is night of Friday, July 26

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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